

Drywall and Ceiling Tile Installers

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Drywall Installers



Ceiling Tile Installers

What They Do

While the wood or steel framing parts carry a building's load, the structural parts of a building are generally covered to provide an attractive living or working space. Years ago, many interior surfaces were covered by wooden lath and plaster. However, most interior spaces today are covered by drywall, which comes in panels of gypsum covered on both sides by heavy paper. These panels go up much more quickly than lath and plaster, saving money during construction.

Ceiling tile is generally used in commercial construction, and is only occasionally used in houses. It serves the same purpose as drywall although it can have greater sound and heat insulation properties.

Only minor changes in techniques and materials have occurred in the past several decades. The traditional metal edging used to reinforce corners has been joined by paper or plastic corners that are round, leading to a different look. However, application techniques are largely unchanged.

Attaching these drywall panels to walls and ceilings, and ceiling tiles to ceilings, is the work of the Drywall and Ceiling Tile Installer.

Tasks

- ▶ Trim rough edges from wallboard to maintain even joints, using knife.
- ▶ Fit and fasten wallboard or Sheetrock into specified position, using hand tools, portable power tools, or adhesive.
- ▶ Measure and mark cutting lines on framing, drywall, and trim, using tape measure, straightedge or square, and marking devices.
- ▶ Install blanket insulation between studs and tacks plastic moisture barrier over insulation.
- ▶ Remove plaster, drywall, or paneling, using crowbar and hammer.
- ▶ Assemble and install metal framing and decorative trim for windows, doorways, and bents.
- ▶ Read blueprints and other specifications to determine method of installation, work procedures, and material and tool requirements.

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- ▶ Lay out reference lines and points, compute position of framing and furring channels, and mark position, using chalk line.
- ▶ Suspend angle iron grid and channel iron from ceiling, using wire.
- ▶ Install horizontal and vertical metal or wooden studs for attachment of wallboard on interior walls, using hand tools.

Detailed descriptions of these occupations may be found in the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) at online.onetcenter.org.

Important Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities

- ▶ Building and Construction — Knowledge of materials, methods, and the tools involved in the construction or repair of houses, buildings, or other structures such as highways and roads.
- ▶ Design — Knowledge of design techniques, tools, and principles involved in production of precision technical plans, blueprints, drawings, and models.
- ▶ Mechanical — Knowledge of machines and tools, including their designs, uses, repair, and maintenance.
- ▶ Installation — Installing equipment, machines, wiring, or programs to meet specifications.
- ▶ Equipment Selection — Determining the kind of tools and equipment needed to do a job.
- ▶ Reading Comprehension — Understanding written sentences and paragraphs in work-related documents.
- ▶ Static Strength — The ability to exert maximum muscle force to lift, push, pull, or carry objects.
- ▶ Explosive Strength — The ability to use short bursts of muscle force to propel oneself (as in jumping or sprinting), or to throw an object.
- ▶ Deductive Reasoning — The ability to apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense.
- ▶ Manual Dexterity — The ability to quickly move your hand, your hand together with your arm, or your two hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble objects.
- ▶ Control Precision — The ability to quickly and repeatedly adjust the controls of a machine or a vehicle to exact positions.
- ▶ Wrist-Finger Speed — The ability to make fast, simple, repeated movements of the fingers, hands, and wrists.

Work Environment

Unlike some construction jobs, Drywall Installers generally work indoors, protected from the weather. This means that Drywall Installers can work when it is raining, snowing, hot, or cold. Sometimes, weather conditions do affect joint compound application and texturing techniques. Hot weather can mean that joint compound will dry quickly, and in some cases cracking in some areas as the compound dries too fast. Cold, damp weather can make the joint compound dry very slowly, affecting scheduling. Installers often will use special mixtures or different techniques to cope with very hot or very cold temperatures.

Drywall Installers work a standard 40-hour week, but the work week may sometimes be longer. Workers who are paid hourly rates may receive premium pay for overtime.

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Some drywall workers belong to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (www.carpenters.org) or International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (www.iupat.org). However, most Drywall Installers in California are not members of a trade union.

California's Job Outlook and Wages

The California Outlook and Wage table below represents the occupation across all industries.

Standard Occupational Classification	Estimated Number of Workers 2004	Estimated Number of Workers 2014	Average Annual Openings	2006 Wage Range (per hour)
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47-2081	40,200	46,300	1,480	\$15.89 to \$26.17

Wages do not reflect self-employment.

Average annual openings include new jobs plus net replacements.

Source: www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov, Employment Projections by Occupation and OES Employment & Wages by Occupation, Labor Market Information Division, Employment Development Department.

Trends

Over the next decade, the employment of Drywall and Ceiling Tile Installers is expected to grow at an average rate compared with all occupations. Employment in the Specialty Trade Contractors industry will grow faster than average compared with all occupations. Most new construction or remodeling projects will use drywall or ceiling tiles to finish walls and ceilings.

Training/Requirements/Apprenticeships

Drywall Installers usually follow one of the following training paths:

- ▶ Formal, three- to four-year apprenticeship
- ▶ Community college programs or certificates
- ▶ Vocational school
- ▶ Extensive on-the-job training

Most Drywall Installers learn the trade on the job. They start learning trade by helping experienced workers, first by cleaning the jobsite, carrying drywall panels, and lifting them into place, and holding them while Installers nail or screw the panels to walls or ceilings. Soon after, they may be given the task of measuring and cutting panels to size, and drilling or cutting holes in them for plumbing lines, or other obstacles. After that they learn how to attach the drywall, and tape seams, corners, and to apply the embedding compound. Eventually, they can master all the skills of the professional Drywall Installer including texturing, hanging ceiling panels, and estimating the costs of a drywall job.

Recommended High School Course Work

Most employers prefer applicants who have at least a high school diploma or equivalent. High school preparation should include courses in shop, basic mathematics, and English.

Where Do I Find the Job?

Direct inquiry with an employer is probably the best way to find a job for both the experienced and inexperienced job applicant. Going out to a construction site may also provide leads as to who is hiring in the area. Union Drywall Installers can go through their local union hall.

Use the *Search for Employers by Industry* feature on the *Career Center* page at

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www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov to locate employers in your area. Search using keywords from the following construction industry names to get a list of private firms and their addresses:

- ▶ Commercial Building
- ▶ Employment Placement Agencies
- ▶ Industrial Building
- ▶ New Multifamily Housing
- ▶ New Single-Family Housing
- ▶ Professional Employer Organizations
- ▶ Residential Remodelers
- ▶ Temporary Help Services

For local listings of contractors, search these **yellow page** headings for listings of private firms:

- ▶ Building Contractors
- ▶ Drywall Contractors
- ▶ General Contractors

Where Can The Job Lead?

Generally, the Drywall Installer begins as a helper and moves up to full journey-level after several years of experience. From there, the Installer may move up to a foreman or manager level worker. In larger firms, he or she may become an estimator. Some Drywall Installers become contractors and open their own businesses.

Other Sources of Information

Associated Builders and Contractors
www.abc.org

National Association of Home Builders
www.nahb.org

Home Builders Institute
www.hbi.org

International Union of Painters and Allied Trades
www.iupat.org

United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America
www.carpenters.org

California Department of Industrial Relations
www.dir.ca.gov

California Department of Consumer Affairs, Contractors State Licensing Board
www.cslb.ca.gov